(a) whether it is a fact that this year's budget allocation for public health care sector is only 1.37% (Rs. 3600 crore) of the total outlay, whereas it was 1.8% (Rs. 2,687 crores) last year;

(b) if so, why this reduction in allocation has been effected; and

(c) how Government propose to meet the challenges posed by higher incidence of disease in rural areas, especialy combating deadly diseases like AIDS, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) and (b) The State Sector outlays for 1998-99 are yet to be finalisd by the Planning Commission. Therefore, it will not be possible to compare percentage of health sector outlay to total outlay of 1998-99 with that of 1997-98. However, during 1997-98 percentage of outlays for Health, Family Welfare and ISM & H was 2.72% of the total outlay for alll sectors.

(c) To meet the health care needs of the people, a comprehensive network of rural health infrastructure comprising 1,36,339 Sub-centres, 22,010 Primary Health Centres and 2,622 Community Health Centres has been established throughout the country. External assistance has been mobilised by the Central Government for supporting National Programmes for control of diseases such as AIDS, Malaria, T.B., Leprosy, and Blindness. To arrest the spread of HIV/AIDS infection, clinical services and cases management activities are being strengthened including creating general awareness among the masses about the disease.

Secondary health facilities are also being upgraded in selected States with World Baank assistance.

Development of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy is being encouraged to widen the network of health services available to the people. A comprehensive project for reproductive and child health caters to the special requirements of Women and children.

Disposable Surgical items Manufactured by Foreign Companies

2034. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether various foreign companies manufacturing syringes and other single use surgical items are flooding the Indian market;

(b) whether it has come to the notice of Government that the packages of most of such items do not carry the statutory labelling information;

(c) whether the consumers are being charged for these items according to the whims of the chemists and stockists; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) Under the import policy disposable syringes and needles can be imported into the country. However, the majority of such items sold in India are assembled within the Country. There are very few importers of finished disposable syringes and needles.

(b) The requirement of labelling are see out under the Drugs and Cosmetic Rules and have to be adhered to. Other than the absence of Maximum Retail Price (MRP) and import licence number in a few imported consignments, no other labelling violation has been brought to the notice of the authorities. The importers as well as Port Officers have been directed to ensure that the MRP and import license number are displayed on the outer packaging cartons.

(c) Disposable syringes and needles are not covered under the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO); nor has the Drug Controlller General (India) received any official complaints from Consumers in this regard.

(d) In view of (c) does not arise.

Scheme for access to Health Care for all

2035. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state: